

Chairman Waukau's Notes

June 14, 2002

Poso My Fellow Menominees:

I had the honor of giving the Commencement address for the Menominee Indian High School and it was very enjoyable speaking to these young people, their family, and friends for one last time before they take their first steps into adulthood. One young lady (Teri Webster) did cartwheels across the stage before she got her diploma. I advised her later that she might have wanted to save the cartwheels until after she got her diploma. These young people are so filled with hope for the future and I wish them well in all they do.

Three Menominee young ladies were on the winning state softball team for Shawano High School. Congratulations go out to Darcie Okimosh, Pamela Waukau, and Suzy Pyawasay.

The Legislature passed the new tribal government ordinance at the June 6th meeting. This is the restructuring initiative advanced by this administration with the purpose of improving accountability and delivery of services. We are now at the most critical point in this whole process and that is the implementation of all the hard work that has been put into this issue.

This administration also advanced the concept of providing a stumpage to tribal members for the use of their tribal forest resources for the mill operation. After much serious debate, the stumpage ordinance was voted down by the Legislature by a vote of 4-2 at the June 6th meeting. I thought it was a good piece of legislation that was fair to both MTE and the tribal members, but the Legislature disagreed. We are working very hard to improve the working relationship between MTL and MTE and I think we have been successful as the Board of Directors is seriously looking at the stumpage issue whereas for years this important issue was on no one's radar screen.

The tribe would be remiss if we did not pursue other casino development opportunities. We have done some preliminary talks with casino development companies and finance people who could fund a large casino in the southern part of the state. The success of such a venture depends upon who the next governor is. Governor Scott McCallum is absolutely against the Menominees expanding to the south. In fact, he was governor for less than a day when he squashed any hopes the tribe had for a casino in Kenosha. Governor McCallum is very close with former governor Martin Schreiber who is the chief lobbyist for the Potawatomi and Schreiber is working very hard to keep us or any other tribe out of the south. They are fearful that a casino in Kenosha will take away from their business. The Menominee's position has always been that there is enough business in gaming for all of the tribes to prosper and in fact, I applaud other tribes that are running successful operations. The Menominee's have never done anything to harm other tribe's abilities to do business and we expect the same consideration from the other tribe's in the state.

Some interesting statistics from the Tribal Police Department: It seems that not many of us are wearing our seat belts: Only 24% of tribal employees driving tribal vehicles are wearing theirs. Of the adult citizen drivers only 22% are wearing seat belts and the scariest statistic of all is that only 9% of Menominee babies are buckled in.

Look for Legislator Besaw to do the next Legislative Corner.

Sincerely,

Lisa Waukau
Honorable Tribal Chairman